AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims to read as follows:

1. (Currently amended) A device that comprises:

a port configured to receive frames on a plurality of virtual channels; and

control logic configured to determine the virtual channels associated with said frames based

upon virtual channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said port is not equal to the number of

virtual channels supported by said external device.

2. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

3. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

4. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said characteristic comprises a set of virtual channel

identifiers.

5. (Original) The device of claim 1, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel

mapping mode.

6. (Original) The device of claim 1 further comprising an incoming remapping table that associates

internal virtual channels with virtual channels of said external device.

7. (Currently amended) A device that comprises:

a port configured to transmit frames on a plurality of virtual channels; and

control logic configured to determine the virtual channels associated with said frames based

upon virtual channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said port is not equal to the number of

virtual channels supported by said external device.

8. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

9. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

10. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said characteristics comprise a set of virtual channel

identifiers.

11. (Original) The device of claim 7, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel

mapping mode.

12. (Original) The device of claim 7 further comprising an outgoing remapping table that

associates internal virtual channels with virtual channels of said external device.

13. (Currently amended) A device that comprises:

a port configured to receive and transmit frames on a plurality of virtual channels; and

control logic configured to determine the virtual channels associated with said frames based

upon virtual channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said port is not equal to the number of

virtual channels supported by said external device.

14. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

15. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

16. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein said characteristics comprise a set of virtual channel identifiers.

17. (Original) The device of claim 13, wherein said characteristic comprises a virtual channel mapping mode.

18. (Original) The device of claim 13 further comprising an incoming and outgoing remapping table that associates internal virtual channels with virtual channels of said external device.

19. (Currently amended) A switch that comprises:

a plurality of ports configured to send and receive frames on a plurality of virtual channels; and

control logic configured to determine the virtual channels associated with said frames based upon virtual channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said plurality of ports is not equal to the number of virtual channels supported by said external device.

20. (Original) The switch of claim 19, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

21. (Original) The switch of claim 19, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

22. (Original) The switch of claim 19, wherein said characteristics comprise virtual channel identifiers.

23. (Original) The switch of claim 19, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel count.

24. (Original) The switch of claim 19, wherein said characteristics comprise a mapping mode.

25. (Currently amended) A method for transmitting frames on virtual channels, the method comprising:

    receiving virtual channel characteristics of an external device;

    determining a correspondence between internal virtual channels and virtual channels of said external device, the number of internal virtual channels not equal to the number of virtual channels supported by said external device; and

    remapping outgoing frames according to said correspondence.

26. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

27. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

28. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said characteristics comprise virtual channel identifiers.

29. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel

count.

30. (Original) The method of claim 25, wherein said characteristics comprise a mapping mode.

31. (Currently amended) A method for receiving frames on virtual channels, the method

comprising:

> receiving virtual channel characteristics of an external device;

> determining a correspondence between internal virtual channels and virtual channels of

>> said external device, the number of internal virtual channels not equal to the

>> number of virtual channels supported by said external device; and

> remapping incoming frames according to said correspondence.

32. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said external device comprises a networking

> device.

33. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

34. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said characteristics comprise virtual channel

identifiers.

35. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel

count.

36. (Original) The method of claim 31, wherein said characteristics comprise a mapping mode.

37. (Currently amended) A method for receiving and transmitting frames on virtual channels, the method comprising:

    receiving virtual channel characteristics of an external device;

    determining a correspondence between internal virtual channels and virtual channels of said external device, the number of internal virtual channels not equal to the number of virtual channels supported by said external device; and

    remapping incoming and outgoing frames according to said correspondence.

38. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein said external device comprises a networking device.

39. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein said external device comprises a user terminal.

40. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein said characteristics comprise virtual channel identifiers.

41. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein said characteristics comprise a virtual channel count.

42. (Original) The method of claim 37, wherein said characteristics comprise a mapping mode.

43. (Currently amended) A Fibre Channel (FC) fabric that comprises:

multiple FC switches couples together,

wherein at least one of the switches is configured with a plurality of ports that send and

receive frames on a plurality of virtual channels and with control logic that

determines the virtual channels associated with said frames based upon virtual

channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said at least one of the switches is not

equal to the number of virtual channels supported by said external device.

44. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ fabric of claim 43, wherein said external device comprises a

networking device.

45. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ fabric of claim 43, wherein said external device comprises a

user terminal.

46. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ fabric of claim 43, wherein said characteristics comprise

virtual channel identifiers.

47. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ fabric of claim 43, wherein said characteristics comprise a

virtual channel count.

48. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ fabric of claim 43, wherein said characteristics comprise a

mapping mode.

49. (Currently amended) A network that comprises:

at least two nodes;

a Fibre Channel (FC) fabric coupling the nodes,

wherein the fabric comprises at least one switch that is configured with a plurality

of ports that send and receive frames on a plurality of virtual channels and with

control logic that determines the virtual channels associated with said frames based

upon virtual channel characteristics from an external device;

wherein the number of virtual channels supported by said at least one switch is not equal to

the number of virtual channels supported by said external device.

50. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ network of claim 49, wherein said external device comprises a

networking device.

51. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ network of claim 49, wherein said external device comprises a

user terminal.

52. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ network of claim 49, wherein said characteristics comprise

virtual channel identifiers.

53. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ network of claim 49, wherein said characteristics comprise a

virtual channel count.

54. (Currently amended) The ~~switch~~ network of claim 49, wherein said characteristics comprise a

mapping mode.

55. (New) The network of claim 49, wherein the at least one switch is coupled to the external device via at least one port out of the plurality of ports.